

Thomas Jefferson to Robert R. Livingston, April 30, 1800 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON J. MSS.

Philadelphia, Apr. 30, 1800.

Dear Sir, —Your favour of Feb. 28. never came to my hand till the 17th inst. This must account for the greater portion of the delay which has attended the acknowledgment of it. I thank you for the volume of your agricultural transactions: & as I perceive you take a great interest in whatever relates to this first & most precious of all the arts, I have packed in a small box, a model of a mouldboard of a plough, of my invention, if that term may be used for a mere change of form. It is accompanied by a block, which will shew the form in which the block is to be got for making the mouldboard & the manner of making it. However as this would not explain it's principles, alone, I accompany it by the late volume of our *Philosophical transactions*, in which there is a minute description of the principles & construction. The printer having (on his removal from the yellow fever) lost several of the plates belonging to this volume & among them that relating to the mouldboard, I have supplied this last by some sketches which may enable you to understand the description. I shall avail myself of the first person of my acquaintance whom I shall know to be passing in the stage to New York, to forward them to you. The printer will have the lost plates ready to replace shortly.

I had before heard of your discovery of the method of making paper from a vegetable & from the specimen sent have no doubt of it's great importance. For this article, the creature

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of art, & but latterly so comparatively, is now interwoven so much into the conveniences & occupations of men as to have become one of the necessities of civilized life.

We are here engaged in improving our constitution by construction, so as to make it what the majority thinks it should have been. The Senate received yesterday a bill from the Representatives incorporating a company for Roosevelt's copper mines in Jersey. This is under the *sweeping clause* of the constitution, & supported by the following pedigree of necessities. Congress are authorized to defend the country: ships are necessary for that defence: copper is necessary for ships: mines are necessary to produce copper: companies are necessary to work mines: and "this is the house that Jack built."

I shall be happy to receive from you, at your leisure, the long letter which you promised. I have been long in the habit of valuing whatever comes from your pen. And my taste, which in 1775. was like yours, in politics, is now passed over with yours to more tranquilizing studies. Accept assurances of my respectful & affectionate esteem.